

He passed away on October 3rd of this year at the age of 54. Judge Gargiulo was the youngest of six children, and was raised on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Judge Gargiulo was a decorated veteran who served in the Active Duty Army, the Mississippi Army National Guard, and the Mississippi Air National Guard. He deployed in support of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. After serving twenty-seven years as a commissioned officer, Judge Gargiulo retired holding the rank of Colonel.

After serving on Active Duty, Judge Gargiulo received his Juris Doctorate from the University of Mississippi School of Law.

In 2000, he was appointed as an Assistant District Attorney. He served as counsel in over fifty jury trials including three capital-offense prosecutions. He prosecuted two of America's Most Wanted criminals, resulting in guilty verdicts. He was awarded the Community Service Award by the Gulf Coast Crime Victim's Rights Coalition in 2005.

In 2009, the Governor of the State of Mississippi appointed Judge Gargiulo as Circuit Court Judge. In August of 2014, after a rigorous screening of candidates by a merit selection panel comprised of lawyers and other citizens, Judge Gargiulo was appointed by the District Court to serve as a United States Magistrate Judge for the Southern District of Mississippi. He served on the bench for more than seven years, before his untimely passing.

On behalf of the 4th Congressional District of Mississippi, we honor the memory of Judge Gargiulo—a loving father, brother, son, patriot, and dedicated public servant. I send my heartfelt condolences to his friends, his three children (Andrew, Jordan, and Katherine), his fiancée (Stephanie Ingram), and his brothers and sister.

HONORING RETIRED COL. VICTOR
"VIC" FERNANDEZ

HON. DOUG LAMBORN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

Mr. LAMBORN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a friend, patriot, and man of great faith, Retired Col. Victor "Vic" Fernandez. A 30-year Army veteran, Vic served his country valiantly and led the effort to establish the Pikes Peak National Cemetery in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

A Colorado native, Vic grew up in Trinidad with a longstanding family tradition of military service. His great grandfather fought in the Civil War, his father in World War II, and his uncle was captured at the battle of Corregidor in World War II and later survived the Bataan Death March. Vic followed this tradition of service to his country and graduated from West Point in 1959 with a degree in mechanical engineering. Vic's 30-year career included two Panama tours, two Germany tours, and multiple stateside postings in addition to his time in the Vietnam War.

Vic served two tours in Vietnam, and upon his return, was disheartened at the poor reception he and other soldiers received. Because of this experience, Vic dedicated his retirement to ensuring that soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan did not share the same experience. He and his wife Sherry, spent

many late nights at airports and military bases, often waiting until 2 a.m., to greet returning troops with a warm handshake, a cheeseburger with fries, a welcoming smile, and prayer.

Additionally, Vic served as president of the Pikes Peak Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America. He was also a founding member of the Board of Home Front Cares and the Southeast Family Center and Armed Services YMCA.

In 1999, Vic became the chairman of the Pikes Peak Veterans Cemetery Committee. He advocated for a National Veterans Cemetery in the Pikes Peak region. Vic wanted a place that would serve the veterans of Southern Colorado for generations to follow. In 2006, he, and the other founding members of the cemetery board, Ralph McCutchen and Joe Henjum approached me with their vision. On my second day in office in January 2007, I introduced H.R. 295, which directed the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a national cemetery for veterans in the Pikes Peak region.

In May of 2008, I conducted a field hearing in Colorado Springs to address The National Cemetery Administration's longstanding 75-mile rule. A typical spring day in Colorado, VA Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs William F. Tuerk and other distinguished guests traveling to the hearing were greeted with sunny weather in Denver upon arrival. By the time they drove through Castle Rock, snowflakes were falling. The field hearing started over an hour late, because of poor road conditions, due to a white-out blizzard on Monument Hill. Vic and everyone involved in the hearing could only attribute the storm to divine intervention.

During the hearing, Vic offered passionate testimony and argued that 'these geographic and weather pattern hindrances make the Veterans Administration internal 75-mile rule a useless tool in the state of Colorado. The combination of the geography, weather patterns and a foolish regulation serves only to assure that the Veterans and their families in the Pikes Peak Region and southern Colorado are not properly nor fairly served by Fort Logan.'

Because of providential weather conditions and the testimony of Vic, and others, Under Secretary Tuerk decided it was appropriate to break the VA's longstanding, 75-mile rule and establish a national cemetery in Southern Colorado.

Years later, after legislation for the cemetery was signed into law, Vic told a reporter, 'I think God is keeping me alive so I can be buried there.' Vic had dedicated over 20 years passionately advocating for this national monument. In 2018, the Pikes Peak National Cemetery opened, with the capacity for 197,000 veterans to be interred. Because of his vision, the Pikes Peak National Cemetery will serve as a permanent monument and final resting place for generations of our nation's heroes.

In addition to his deep-rooted patriotism, Vic was a man of dedicated spiritual conviction. A longtime parishioner at St. Francis of Assisi in Colorado Springs, he served as a Grand Knight in the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic men's chapter that he helped to establish.

Vic was a giant amongst men and lived his life tenaciously in service to his Creator, his nation, his family, and his community. His life-

time of service has left a permanent impact on the Pikes Peak region.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues in Congress join me in honoring this man of great faith, passion, and patriotism, my friend, U.S. Army Retired Col. Victor "Vic" Fernandez.

HONORING DONALD BAKER

HON. H. MORGAN GRIFFITH

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

Mr. GRIFFITH. Madam Speaker, I rise in honor of Clintwood, Virginia's mayor, Donald Baker, who died on October 7, 2021, at the age of 83. Mr. Baker was a dedicated and longtime public servant.

Mr. Baker served the town of Clintwood for over three decades. He was first elected to the town's council in 1980 and served as the mayor since 1988. He was spoken very highly of by his colleagues for his enduring generosity to the community. He was a great representative for the citizens of Clintwood. He was attentive to the community's concerns and addressed them with compassion and integrity.

During his time in service, he worked diligently to build coalitions to obtain grants and funding for community improvement projects. He was well known for governing by conservative financial values. During his 41 years of service, he kept the provision of affordable goods and services as a top priority for him. He was esteemed by colleagues on both sides of the aisle. Mr. Baker was known as a friend to many and held a strong voice in the region.

Outside of his work in the public service, he worked and operated in the coal industry for many years. He also served as a Bank Director at several banks in the region up until his retirement. And he was a member of the Army Reserve Forces serving at rank of Sergeant.

Even in his free time, Mr. Baker still dedicated his time to helping others. For over 60 years he volunteered at every level of Little League baseball and softball. He tirelessly worked with school leaders and coaches to support Clintwood athletics and their children.

Mayor Baker was preceded in death by his wife, Martha Ann Anderson; his parents, James Garfield Baker and Nell Arrington Baker; and his brothers, Harold Baker, Carl Baker, and Marvin Baker.

He is survived by his two sons, Greg Baker and his wife Lora, and Mike Baker; his granddaughter, Emily Ann Baker Dressner; grandson Thomas Gregory Baker; and one great-grandson, John Mark Dressner. I offer my condolences on the loss of this good man and great leader.

CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COM-
MENDATION FOR SERGEANT
FIRST CLASS KEN CATES

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Madam Speaker, I'm honored to present Sergeant First Class